The National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years

Summary: Guidance to support Standard 11: Medication relating to the occasional administration of non-prescribed liquid paracetamol to unwell children.

The Welsh Government have been notified by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) of issues and concerns relating to children's health and well-being within registered childcare and play settings. In particular these issues and concerns relate to the specific provision of **non-prescribed medication** in the form of liquid paracetamol to children. Children's health needs to be protected at all times and where indicated, children should be able to receive prompt treatment for the relief of pain or high temperature whilst in registered childcare and play settings in accordance with the licensed indications of paracetamol and subject to the consent of the child's parent/carer.

This guidance describes situations in which the administration of liquid paracetamol [1] is considered acceptable and supplements the current Standard 11 for Medication in National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to 12 years published November 2023, and is effective immediately. The Standard relating to medication will be updated in line with a wider cyclical review and consultation on the NMS in in due course.

The concerns and issues highlighted by CIW have led to calls for clarity on what providers can and cannot do in relation to the administration of liquid paracetamol in accordance with **Standard 11: Medication.** Particular clarification is required regarding whether non-prescribed liquid paracetamol can be possessed and administered to children when appropriate safeguards are in place. The Welsh Government recommends that registered providers can possess, store and administer liquid paracetamol in the limited circumstances described in this guidance.

Currently, the NMS allows for the provision of prescribed medication for relevant children but does not specifically refer to non-prescribed medication. This circular letter therefore provides updating guidance enabling providers to possess, store and administer non-prescribed liquid paracetamol subject to the following conditions being met:

- The registered childcare or play setting has a medicine policy which describes the circumstances in which liquid paracetamol may be administered to a child who is attending the setting. The policy must be shared with the parent/carer and must set out the arrangements and procedures in place supporting the safe administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication, including when there is an emergency situation whilst relevant children are being cared

[1] For the purposes of this guidance paracetamol liquid refers to individual 5mL sachets of paracetamol suspension each containing 250mg of paracetamol per 5mL, only.

Commented [A1]: Sometimes we say liquid paracetamol and others we say paracetamol liquid? Which one for consistency?

Commented [A2R1]: I've referred to Liquid paracetamol throughout

Commented [A3]: This statement is very general should it refer specifically to "regarding the administration of non-prescription medicines in registered childcare and play settings."

Commented [A4]: See earlier post, move this to be the first point

Commented [A5]: Sorry not sure of the correct terminology

Commented [A6]: The law on medicines talks about having a medicine in one's possession

Commented [A7]: I don't think we need to specifiy the use of sachets. Dosing can be more difficult if you need to give half a sachet or 1 ½ sachets.

Commented [A8R7]: This was discussed in the meeting and the consensus was sachets were safer and easier to manage for the age of children. Is this not the case?

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for at the setting. E.g., in the event of a child having a high temperature.

- The child's parents/carers have given permission for the provider to administer liquid paracetamol to the relevant child in the circumstances described in the medicines policy.

- Childcare settings can purchase sachets of liquid paracetamol and must ensure arrangement are in place for the safe storage, administration and record keeping of doses of liquid paracetamol used in accordance with the medicines policy.

- The expiry dates of all stocked must be checked regularly (at least every three months), and before every administration.

The following outlines the conditions under which a registered childcare or play setting is permitted to administer liquid paracetamol.

- A child can become acutely ill (raised temperature or mild to moderate pain e.g. teething) whilst in a childcare setting.
- In these situations, it is most appropriate for the child to be collected by a parent or carer however:

(a) it may take some time for the parent or carer to collect the child or arrange collection by someone else; or
(b) the parent or carer may not be immediately contactable

In these situations, it would be appropriate for the child to be given a **single (age appropriate) dose of paracetamol** until the child can be collected subject to the following conditions:

(a) the child's parent or carer has given prior consent to their child being given paracetamol;

And;

(b) the child's parent or carer has been contacted;
(c) the parent or carer has given consent for the dose of paracetamol to be given;
(d) a period of at least 4 hours has passed since the last dose of paracetamol was given; and
(e) the parent or carer has undertaken to collect the child from the care provider at the earliest opportunity/as soon as is practicable. It should not be assumed that the child is better after receiving the dose;
(f) the care provider keeps records of any paracetamol given

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Or;

(g) the care provider has attempted to contact the child's parent or carer, but they cannot be contacted;
(h) the care provider has contacted NHS111;
(i) a healthcare professional (at NHS111) has advised that it would be appropriate for a dose of paracetamol to be given; and
(j) the care provider subsequently contacts the child's parent or carer to arrange for the child to be collected from the care provider at the earliest opportunity/as soon as is practicable. It should not be assumed that the child is better after receiving the dose;
(k) the care provider keeps records of any paracetamol given.

In addition to the above, registered childcare and play settings must continue to adhere to Standard 10.2:

- No child is received if he/she appears to be ill. If children become unwell during their time in the childcare or play setting, care is taken to prevent possible infection of other children and parents are notified as soon as possible.

The administration of liquid paracetamol is reserved for urgent situation in which it is impracticable for a child's parents/carers to collecting the child promptly and only where such administration is in accordance with the guidance set out in this letter.

End.

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